

THE UNITED STATES PRESIDENTIAL SCHOLARS PROGRAM

FACT SHEET

The United States Presidential Scholars Program was established in 1964, by Executive Order of the President, to recognize and honor some of our Nation's most distinguished graduating high school seniors. In 1979, the Program was extended to recognize students who demonstrate exceptional talent in the visual, creative and performing arts. Each year, up to 141 students are named as Presidential Scholars, one of the Nation's highest honors for high school students. The Scholars represent excellence in education and the promise of greatness in young people. In honoring the Presidential Scholars, the President of the United States symbolically honors all graduating high school seniors of high potential.

Students have the opportunity to become Presidential Scholars based on two paths of accomplishment. The majority of the Scholars are selected on the basis of broad academic achievement. Approximately twenty additional students are selected on the basis of their academic and artistic scholarship in the visual arts, the performing arts, or creative writing.

Each year some 3,000 candidates are identified for the academic component of the program, based on having scored exceptionally well on the College Board SAT or the ACT Assessment. Eligible students are U.S. citizens graduating or receiving a diploma between January and August of the current program year, and students who have taken the SAT or ACT Assessment on or before the preceding October. Students meeting these requirements are automatically considered for participation. Initial inclusion in the pool of eligible candidates is determined by the information (e.g., citizenship or graduation year) provided by the student on his/her SAT or ACT test registration.

Test scores in each of the states/jurisdictions are reviewed, and the total SAT score is compared to the ACT Sum of Scores. Each student's highest test score (in a single test administration) is identified; duplicates and/or lower scores are dropped. In each state, scores are ranked from high to low. Approximately twenty females and twenty males are selected as candidates from each state, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and from families of U.S. citizens living abroad. Students are considered in their states of legal residence, unless they have lived abroad for two years or more. Candidacy materials are mailed to students for participation in the program. Application is by invitation only; students do not apply individually to the program, nor do their schools nominate them.

For the arts component of the Program, students are initially selected based on their artistic ability. Students must register for and participate in the *youngARTS*, a national

program identifying and recognizing young people demonstrating excellence in the arts. Upon completion of the *youngARTS* program, the National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts nominates approximately 60 students who meet the Presidential Scholars candidacy requirements. Candidacy materials are mailed to those selected students, inviting them to apply to the program. To confirm their interest and assist in the selection process, all academic and arts candidates complete and submit candidacy materials for review, including essays, self-assessments, secondary school reports and transcripts.

A review committee of qualified individuals experienced in secondary and post-secondary education evaluates candidates on their academic achievement, personal characteristics, leadership and service activities, and the quality and content of their essay. Approximately 500 candidates are named semifinalists, and their names and supporting materials are forwarded to the Commission for further review.

In April, the White House Commission on Presidential Scholars reviews the applications of all semifinalists, applying the same criteria used by the review committee. The Commission selects up to 121 Academic Scholars and up to 20 Arts Scholars. All scholars are honored for their accomplishments during the program's national recognition events, held in June in Washington, D.C.

During this trip, Presidential Scholars are guests of the Commission and enjoy an expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C., to meet with government officials, educators, authors, musicians, scientists and other accomplished people. Scholars have the opportunity to visit museums and monuments, and to attend recitals, receptions and ceremonies. To commemorate their achievement, the Scholars are awarded the Presidential Scholars medallion at a ceremony sponsored by the White House.

Each Presidential Scholar is asked to identify the one teacher who has most influenced him or her, and the selected educators are also invited to attend the recognition events. These distinguished professionals are honored for their efforts at a special reception, and presented with the Teacher Recognition award.

Since 1964, this unique federal program has honored more than 5,000 Presidential Scholars, who have demonstrated leadership, scholarship, artistic ability and contribution to school and community. The work of the Commission on Presidential Scholars reaffirms, on behalf of the President, the Nation's commitment to education.

For general information about the Presidential Scholars Program, please contact 202/401-0961 or <http://www.ed.gov/programs/psp/index.html> (case sensitive). For general information on the Arts component of the program, please contact the National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts at 1-800-970-ARTS or www.nfaa.org. For specific questions regarding the Presidential Scholars Program application, contact 319/341-2PSP (341-2777) or PSP@act.org.